

Episode 100: Where Are They Now?

David Crabill: Welcome to episode 100 of the Forrager Podcast!

[00:00:05] I wanted to do something special for this episode, so I asked my audience for ideas of what I could do, and then I had them vote on their favorite idea.

[00:00:14] And one idea easily stood out above the rest. Most people said that for this special episode, they wanted me to bring back past guests to get an update on what's happened since they were last on the show. So you're going to get to hear from many of my previous guests today.

[00:00:29] Not everyone was able to participate, but over 75 percent did share an update.

[00:00:35] Now, I did not invite all of my past guests to participate in this episode. For starters, I didn't invite any guests from this year unless I knew that they had a major update to share. I also only invited guests who were still running their food business when they were on the show.

[00:00:51] For the guests I did invite, I asked them to focus on three things in their update. I asked them what's changed since they were on the show, whether that change surprised them, and what they've learned along the way.

[00:01:04] And I must say, after listening to all of these updates, I was really struck by how different and unique most of them are. Many of the updates surprised me, and it serves as a reminder of just how unpredictable business and life can be.

[00:01:18] To celebrate this special episode, I thought it would be fun to do a little giveaway, so I am giving away 3 boxes of my fudge. If you don't already know, fudge is what I sell with my cottage food business. So to get a chance to win one of the boxes, all you need to do is take a moment and leave me an honest review on Apple Podcasts. If you don't have an Apple device, you can find someone who does, or download iTunes on a Windows computer. Once you've left your review, go to forrager.com/contact, and let me know what username you used to leave the review. And if you've left me a review in the past, thank you so much, just let me know and I'll include you in the drawing as well. The deadline for participating in this giveaway is October 31st, 2023.

[00:02:01] At the end of this episode, I'll be sharing a couple small changes I'll be making to the show moving forward, based on what I've learned over the past 100 episodes.

[00:02:10] And finally, before we jump in, I just wanted to mention the up until this point. Every episode has been no more than one hour long. but this episode is going to be a bit longer than that. I did not set a time limit for this one.

[00:02:23] All right. Let's get to it. These updates are in the same order as the guests appeared on the show. So, let's start with my first ever guest. Lauren from episode two.

[00:02:34] **Lauren Cortesi:** Hi, I'm Lauren Cortesi and I was the owner of Bella's Desserts, located in Pennsylvania. I started my business in 2002 so I could be a stay at home mom to Bella and not go crazy. Almost 20 years to the day this past December, I retired the business, had hand surgery one day later, then in June moved to another state.

[00:02:55] While Bella's Desserts is now defunct, Traveling Cookies has emerged. I will be continuing to offer cookies and other small goodies. I plan on also continuing my consulting for home based businesses as well, so give me a call! I started letting everyone know in July of 2022 that this was happening and quick get your orders in and boy did that work.

[00:03:20] Lots of hugs and well wishes for my longtime clients and I have no regrets. Not one. I did my last wedding cake for a woman I've known since she was in her mom's womb in May and two weeks later we were off to our new adventure. The hardest part of my retirement was actually selling 20 years worth of equipment.

[00:03:40] It took a year and a half to unload, and I just sold my last item last week I used all of the money I made to buy a dream box, which I've been saving for three years, and it is a dream come true. This is a fabulous way to make money, provide for yourself, for your family, stay home with your kids, and just get some great satisfaction outside of being A mom or a dad.

[00:04:07] So I highly recommend it and good luck to you all!

[00:04:10] **David Crabill:** I remember when Lauren posted on social media that she was shutting down her business. And my first thought was she's been running her business for over 20 years and she definitely deserves a retirement.

But it sounds like she's not actually retiring, she's just starting a whole new business selling cookies instead.

[00:04:29] I guess Lauren has this in her blood and probably is never going to stop selling her baked goods. best wishes as she moves forward with this new business.

[00:04:37] now let's hear from Dawn from Episode 3.

[00:04:41] **Dawn Belisle:** Hello, this is Dawn Belisle with Delights by Dawn. So much has changed for me as I have shut down Delights by Dawn in the United States because I moved to France and I am now working on opening Delights by Dawn in France to introduce to French people and also to bring to the American expats American desserts.

[00:05:08] So my goal is to do a fusion of French and American desserts, since I did go to French pastry school two years ago, and I am now living permanently in France, to bring something new and exciting to the French culture, and also bring something to the American expats who miss the types of desserts in the United States that they can't get here in France.

[00:05:36] **David Crabill:** Much like Lauren, when I heard that Dawn was moving to France and obviously closing her business in the U. S., I figured there's no way she's gonna move her business to France.

[00:05:47] But of course she is. Another interesting thing about Dawn, she actually was involved in a very large Nextdoor promotion. I was just randomly browsing online and then saw her face on a Nextdoor ad and I'm like, hey, that's Dawn. so yeah, this was nationwide. So that was pretty significant for her. And both Dawn and Lauren were actually featured in the most recent Homemade for Sale book. So if you get a chance to check that out, you'll see them in there.

[00:06:16] alright, so now let's hear from Diana from Episode 4.

[00:06:21] **Diana Shockley:** Hi, this is Diana Shockley, founder and owner of I Love Pie Bake Shop, based in Northern California. Since I was last on the show, my business and I have personally been through so much. I feel like I've been through it all. My business moved physical locations. I went through IVF, was pregnant and had a baby, and I also experienced the death of my mother and, of course, there was a pandemic.

[00:06:45] In spite of all of those challenges and constant pivoting that was necessary to survive, my pie shop has been growing. I'm so happy to report. But I do wanna share that for me during the pandemic. I just learned so much about myself and my business. I feel like the pandemic made me come face to face with myself and like what kind of business owner I was like, more importantly, what kind of employer I was.

[00:07:11] I wasn't selfish. I never wanted to just look out for myself and my business and lay people off and not care about my team. I did the opposite. I decided to really take care of my people

[00:07:22] my team is an extension of me I nurture them that way.

[00:07:26] Being an employer is the most fulfilling and exciting part of running my business But taking care of our customers and treating them like people is also what drives us. So those two things I feel have ultimately made us successful.

[00:07:38] As I said on the last podcast, I opened my storefront in August of 2019.

[00:07:42] That was six months before the pandemic. We had no idea what was just around the corner. since we opened, our business has grown 300% and I am only physically working in the bakery about 35 to 40 hours per week and all of my office work I do from home. So it doesn't really feel like work.

[00:07:57] I just plan things out very thoroughly and strategically and I'm very obsessed with time blocking. I highly recommend that, but The most important piece of advice that I want to pass on to anyone in their small business is to just keep learning. This is what made me go from, a small business, barely starting out doing like a hundred thousand a year in revenue.

[00:08:15] And now we're like at half a million revenue. And this is just a short time. And during the pandemic, the growth has just continued because like my own mental limits, Kept us small and educating myself and just constantly learning is what broke down those barriers for me. So that's something that just, I highly recommend.

[00:08:34] Just keep learning. Look, I'm a solo founder. I have a two year old, I have a 15 year old and a husband and I own a home and the world just demands a lot of us, no matter what your situation is, but the key is to find little windows of time to commit to your business and have the motivation to do so.

[00:08:50] I really felt like a little nobody five years ago and now I'm about to participate in a six month mastermind called the Blueprint Mastermind. And I'm going to be coached and mentored by three incredible businesswomen. One of them you may have heard of is Alli Webb, the founder of Drybar who sold her business for over 200 million.

[00:09:08] And I'm going to be working with her and getting coached by her. It's insane. But I am just so excited for the next five years.

[00:09:15] **David Crabill:** Diana's Pie Shop is actually just a few minutes away from my house, and we actually did that initial interview in my house, it was right before the pandemic, I think like a week before everything shut down, But it's been cool for me to literally see her progress. I drove by her old pie shop on a regular basis. And then when I saw that it closed during the pandemic, I thought, Oh no. But of course

[00:09:39] She just upgraded to a shopping center that has a lot of high end restaurants. So she's got a lot better location now, and when I looked at her storefront, it was amazing how she set it all up. I don't know how she does all that she does, but it doesn't look like she's slowing down any time soon.

[00:09:55] Alright, next up we have Sonia from episode 7.

[00:10:00] **Sonia Chang:** Hi Forrager community, I'm Sonia Chang, founder and CEO of Cali Granola. I've been a cottage food operation since 2013. Hard to believe it's been 10 years already that I have been on the Granola Girl journey. So it started with granola and it moved, scaled up to a commercial bakery that was a cupcake store.

[00:10:24] And when I lost that lease and was out of there, I decided I was going to take a building, demo it, and build a shared kitchen. So it's two bakeries and two commissaries up in Altadena, California. That journey has taken five years, still not there yet. I'm persevering on it. And I think that's what we need as entrepreneurs.

[00:10:48] We have to learn to be resilient and persevere. And when something doesn't go quite what we wanted, we have to shift our plan. So I decided to focus on my consulting business and I've had the, the joy of consulting a couple of high schoolers, and that's been fun to. Inspire and be inspired by the next generation of bakers.

[00:11:11] And Cali Granola had the honor and the thrill of being recognized as a Good Food Award recipient.

[00:11:20] So Cali Granola's La Cañada blend and the San Francisco blend both made it to finalists. And then the San Francisco blend became the 2023 granola winner for the snack category. So that's very exciting for Cali Granola and

[00:11:35] the other exciting thing is that I created a mosquito repellent from the upcycling of the citrus that I use for my granola and glazed nuts. And that has taken off.

[00:11:46] This is the fourth summer I've been selling it and it's doing very well. It's on Etsy. It's called the Citrus Bug Defense and it's all natural. And so people really like that fact that it's all natural and nobody likes mosquitoes. So I just want to leave you with a word of encouragement, **follow your passion, stay true to your mission.**

[00:12:06] **And even though there's ups and downs, remember you are going for the long journey. It's not a short sprint. You're going for the long journey and just focus on the joy that you bring people with your products and the pride that you have in your products.**

[00:12:22] **David Crabill:** I actually worked with Sonia a couple years ago when we were trying to get our cottage food bill passed in California, and she testified on a couple hearings for that bill, She's one of the biggest supporters of our cottage food industry in California, and I continue to be very grateful for her. and I really hope that she can open that shared kitchen soon. She has been persevering on that for a long time.

[00:12:46] alright next up we have Kevin from episode 9.

[00:12:51] **Kevin Martino:** Hi, this is Kevin Martino with Chef Kev's Specialty Foods. It's been 10 years since I started my cottage food business. I'm now in 16 local breweries and taprooms. Wholesale is still a large portion of my business, although I'm continuing to get new and repeat customers on my website. One thing that I have learned when trying to get a new customer, such as a business, Never be afraid of them saying no.

[00:13:17] It's all part of the game. Just move on to the next potential customer. You can always follow up with them at a later time. I decided to shift my focus to making entirely just peanut snacks. Some new flavors I have are sea salt and

black pepper and a trail mix. For me it's hard to make a batch of cookies with just one customer.

[00:13:41] In late 2020, my family and I published a cookbook on Amazon called Our Italian Family Recipes. It is a collection of southern Italian dishes. I'm always thinking of new ideas for things to make. I'm excited to see what I come up with next.

[00:14:00] **David Crabill:** Kevin was one of the very first cottage food entrepreneurs I ever met. This is over a decade ago And I've gotten to know him pretty well over the years. One thing he didn't really talk about was just how hard the pandemic was.

[00:14:12] He sells to breweries and during the pandemic breweries, at least in California were deemed non essential businesses. So most of his business was really wiped out for a long stretch there, but he persisted, and I'm glad to hear how well his business is doing now.

[00:14:29] All right. Next up is Tina Karnath from episode 10. And unfortunately, she wasn't able to record an update because she was bogged down helping with her son's wedding, which I completely understand, but she did take some time to write an update. and I will share that with you right now, she said,

[00:14:46] COVID had my business explode. People opted for individually wrapped cookies for graduation, birthdays, drive by showers, weddings, etc. Cakes and cupcakes were definitely not popular for a bit there. Since Michigan couldn't pass the cottage food bill last year, I had to scale back the business since the current gross income limit is 25, 000 per year, the bill aimed to increase it to at least 40, 000, but the election got in the way, and then the two representatives who sponsored the bill weren't re elected.

[00:15:15] I've scaled back my business again this year, and I'm waiting to see about a commercial license so I don't have restrictions.

[00:15:23] So that was Tina's update and definitely crazy that she's had to scale back her business because of an arbitrary sales limit that was set over a decade ago. In fact, Michigan now is in a three way tie for having the lowest sales limit of any state. So crossing our fingers that they will get that updated, but I could definitely understand why Tina is looking into going commercial and I hope that she finds a way to make that work.

[00:15:50] Alright, next up we have Christine from episode 11.

[00:15:55] **Christine Bertz:** I'm Dr. Christine Bertz, the owner of B& B's Provisions, and since I was on the show, my life has taken a sharp right turn. In 2022, I was selected as a Science and Technology Policy Fellow by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. STP Fellows spend one to two years placed in a federal agency in Washington, D. C. doing policy work, which meant I had to move. Now, I don't know if you've ever tried to put 80,000 bees in a moving truck, but I had not. And it wasn't a great time in my life to try to learn that skill, and realistically, I knew I'd reached a point where I was trying to wear too many hats. So, I've set aside my business for now, but not forever.

[00:16:35] And in the meantime, I'm starting the second year of my fellowship in the Office of Marine Conservation at the U. S. Department of State. One of the things I loved about my honey business was using the bees as ambassadors for native pollinator conservation. That science communication piece was really important to me, and I'm still doing science communication, but now I get to use it to help inform data driven U.

[00:16:58] S. policymaking on international marine conservation.

[00:17:01] So, this is where I am now, but I do want to pick up beekeeping again one day. For now, I am a once and future beekeeper. And when I start over, I'll be able to use everything I learned from the last time to build a stronger foundation for my bees and my business.

[00:17:17] **David Crabill:** Fun fact, Christine was the only person who I'm aware of who's ever had to request permission to come on the podcast. I guess that's one of the things you need to think about when you work for the federal government. But, I definitely understand and agree with her decision not to try to move 80,000 bees.

[00:17:34] And just to complete the update, she did give her bees to somebody else in Tennessee, who is now running the colony.

[00:17:41] Alright, next up, we have Kathy from episode 13.

[00:17:46] **Kathy Cherie:** Hi David, it's Kathy Cherie from Cake Du Jour. I can't believe it's been three years since my interview. I'm proud to have been part of it. A lot has happened in Illinois since then. Illinois has a pretty good cottage food law. In my interview, I spoke of spinning my wheels trying to get

one, but thanks to you and your connections, I finally was able to really be a part of making it happen.

[00:18:10] An amazing group of people knew how to make it happen. I was on committees, gave radio talks, student interviews, and even testified before the Illinois Senate. Now the crazy part is that after all these years, I still have not applied for my license. I will, but I kind of feel that my life's goal has been reached.

[00:18:30] I've been part of something that is making it easier for those who will follow me. Thanks, David, for your help in making that possible. It was the work of a whole lot of people who knew what they were doing and really were invested in making it happen.

[00:18:45] We have a little bit more work to do on it, but we're tweaking the law. And I'm just thrilled. One of these days, I'm going to get that license just to complete the circle. And then, maybe I'll advertise.

[00:18:58] **David Crabill:** Kathy has the distinction of being the longest running cottage food business that I've had on the show. I think last I checked she started selling 42 years ago or something like that. I think she's also the only guest that's been on my podcast that doesn't have any kind of official food business license or anything like that. And in her episode, she did talk about operating illegally and that her local officials didn't really care so much. But now...

[00:19:24] with her help, Illinois has an amazing law and maybe this episode will help encourage her to actually get that license.

[00:19:31] Alright, next up we have Patricia from Episode 14.

[00:19:35] **Patricia Bedford:** Hi, my name is Patricia Bedford, and I own Suga's Cakery, a cupcake, cake, and classic dessert shop in Pflugerville, Texas. Since I was on the show, I actually was in business with my food truck for two years.

[00:19:49] And then I decided to sell it. And now I've moved into a brick and mortar here in Pflugerville,

[00:19:54] definitely a change that surprised me.

[00:19:57] When I started my food truck, I didn't set out to um, get into a brick and mortar at all. I just thought that I would get into a food truck and make that work, maybe get other food trucks or food trailers going too, but I quickly learned that, a food trailer Really didn't suit my needs because it's too hot in Texas. So, that's why I started looking for a brick and mortar because I was using the food trailer to produce out of and sell. So, lesson learned there. I went, when I do get another food truck or trailer, preferably a truck. I will uh, actually use that not to produce just to sell.

[00:20:41] So that's what I've learned. I am grateful for my brick and mortar now that I can have enough space to produce and sell my goods.

[00:20:49] **David Crabill:** definitely amazing to see how far Patricia has come in just a few short years. When she was on the episode, she was in the process of starting her food truck and had no ambition to open a brick and mortar. So it's quite the transition for her.

[00:21:02] And one thing that she didn't mention was she was actually featured by Google My Business. So, Google sent a video team out to her food truck to do a shoot on her business.

[00:21:13] So, that was pretty impressive. I thought that was pretty cool.

[00:21:16] Alright, next up we have Nicole from Episode 17

[00:21:21] **Nicole Barry:** Hi, this is Nicole Barry with Baked Toujours,

[00:21:23] over the last three years, it's been, one foot into my business with Bake Toujours and one foot towards, you know, my family and raising kids and moving another time.

[00:21:35] now we're in Anchorage, Alaska.

[00:21:38] so it's been an interesting three years in regards to how to focus on the business. As kids get older, I was expecting more independence and more time for me and my business.

[00:21:52] However, it's been more carting the kids around to their sports and, things like that. So it's really been Important for me to be intentional with my time when I do have it to, um, make a plan. And that's what I'm sort of working on now is a business plan. So I actually can be intentional with, what I want for Baked Tujours.

[00:22:15] Since the move, I have continued my online business, so I'm still doing YouTube and I do ebooks online and also I have classes online that I hold, through my website. um, in terms of business, I feel like I am almost in the same spot. I've gained followers via Instagram and YouTube,

[00:22:39] We have about 30, 000 followers On YouTube and it is an amazing spot.

[00:22:45] but, payment has gone down with YouTube. You have to be super consistent, putting out constant. Videos for that. And, it's just not lucrative.

[00:22:56] My main goal at this point, three years later, is to really find a niche in Anchorage and be able to serve the community here. I've looked into the cottage food laws here, they seem super simple and straightforward, but we have a Hairy dog. So I'm looking outside of, the home just to sort of have a flexible business in the city and be able to serve the community again.

[00:23:24] and, just looking forward to a new chapter, but in regards to that, like, just three years ago, speaking with David, I've learned, that emailing list was An incredible growth for me.

[00:23:36] as I was saying, YouTube, not super, huge in my growth, but with my emailing and marketing, I was able to get, a wonderful following for my business and have people purchase eBooks that were out, just being able to let everybody know when I had something out.

[00:23:56] That might help them in their pastry growth, was so incredibly important so now I'm sort of switching gears and I'm hoping that that email list can grow more locally and not so much online.

[00:24:11] Only, customers So the last three years have been sort of a holding point and I am looking forward to growth in a different direction in the next coming years.

[00:24:23] **David Crabill:** Nicole mentioned in there, talking to me about an email list, and that's not actually something that we discussed on her episode, it was after her episode that we had a little chat. And

[00:24:32] it just seemed like email was an obvious next step so I recommended ConvertKit and she has really put in the work to publishing a newsletter every single week and she does a phenomenal job with it.

[00:24:44] I was pretty surprised by her update honestly, I figured she was doing very well with YouTube, going from 10,000 to 30,000 subscribers. And

[00:24:53] in talking with her more, it just sounds like she's at the point where she really needs to hire help to create a sustainable system for producing content and as she did that, I think she could do quite well with YouTube, but regardless, she really has done a phenomenal job building a loyal following through her email list, and it'll be interesting to see where her business takes her from here.

[00:25:14] All right, next up, we have Becca from episode 19.

[00:25:19] **Becca Aronowitz:** Hi, this is Becca Aronowitz. I own Sweet Whimsy Shop, which is a cottage food bakery specializing in artisan cake pops. When I chatted with David, it was I think the fall of 2020, and I was pregnant with our second child, who is now almost three years old. It'll be three in December. And since then I've continued to grow my business, probably more so online than, than actual growth locally.

[00:25:47] Mainly because I've got two kids and it seems doubly hard to run the business from home with the two crazies here. Thankfully, my oldest is now in school full time, but we've got a few more years before the youngest gets there. I've probably put more attention into growing in social media, doing some tutorials.

[00:26:05] I've had a lot of requests for that and that's something that I found a lot of satisfaction in.

[00:26:10] I do love to teach and I've been using that to offer tutorials and then just to share on social media different tips and tricks on how to make Cake Pops.

[00:26:19] We did move houses. We stayed in the same city, but I learned after moving, even though I thought I had done my due diligence to make sure that I could operate my business per the HOA's guidelines.

[00:26:32] I learned after the fact that the county had different standards and I was not able to immediately just start running my cottage food business here as I had in the other places that I had lived. So I had to apply for a conditional use permit, I had to go to different hearings, I had a giant public notice sign in my yard.

[00:26:51] For what seemed like forever, and it took about six months. it was frustrating, it was crazy. But I'm one of the few people in my area in the specific zone of the county that is operating quote unquote legally, and I feel really great about that. So otherwise it's just been a very, slow and steady process of building my business locally and, and building a bit online.

[00:27:15] **David Crabill:** The last time we spoke, I remember Becca was really focused on potentially expanding her teaching, but Also thought it might be a while before she really could focus on that because of her kids. And that sounds like it's about how it's gone. And with me having a two year old and a four year old at home, I definitely can relate to that.

[00:27:34] And I still can't believe how difficult the government makes it to start a legal food business from home sometimes, but it sounds like Becca is still as committed as ever to her food business.

[00:27:46] Next up we have Noel from episode 20.

[00:27:50] **Noel Martinez:** Hi, my name is Noel Martinez, the owner and baker at Mami's Bakes, my gluten free vegan home bakery inspired by my mom, aka Mami, who I lost in 2019. I started working on this business idea about three years ago while working at an Amazon warehouse and selling to my co workers, my first customers. I'm proud to say that last year I left my old job to focus on building the business, which was pretty scary, but I got licensed and insured last December.

[00:28:24] I learned that although I worked hard on social media and email marketing for over six months, it wasn't until I started doing in person pop ups and events That I started growing my following and customer base. People wanted to know me, my story, and why I do what I do. Today, I bake wholesale for three local businesses, do online sales, and sell at events almost weekly.

[00:28:52] I want to continue growing, but stay home based. And I have my Mami, my partner, my customers, and God to thank for all of it.

[00:29:01] **David Crabill:** I was definitely interested to hear Noel's update because when he came on the show, he was a very early stage business. One of the earliest stage entrepreneurs that I've had on the show. And I remember when he was on, he was talking about wanting to see if he could eventually quit one of his jobs.

[00:29:19] I think he was working two jobs at the time. So it's great to see that he's been able to do that, expand into more direct sales, and now go wholesale. So, quite a success story from him.

[00:29:31] Next up, we have Melvin from episode 21.

[00:29:35] **Melvin Roberson:** Hey everybody. This is Melvin Roberson, the owner of Doughboy Donuts. We are currently hoping to expand soon. At the moment, what we've been doing with the weather, how it's been so hot in Texas, we've parked our food truck for a bit and we have kind of taken a step back and just kind of getting back to our roots and going over some processes, operations, kind of refining some recipes and things like that, working on our shop checklist and Training manuals, things like that.

[00:30:04] For when we do actually open up another location, all those, all those things will be down pat and we'll be able to train our new staff properly and be a full go. So that's pretty much it. Forrager podcast. Congratulations guys.

[00:30:19] **David Crabill:** Unfortunately, I don't think Melvin realized just how much has happened since he was on the show. Since I last spoke to him, he moved to a separate... Brick and mortar location, and it's really an impressive space. It's, I think, probably the biggest storefront of any guests that I've had on the show. So I'm sure Melvin's learned a ton in his new location. His business has grown immensely. He's been on the local news many times, so I'd say that was a pretty humble update for sure, but suffice it to say, his business is doing quite well.

[00:30:51] Alright, next up, we have Yuliya from episode 24.

[00:30:56] **Yuliya Childers:** Yuliya Childers, Wild Yeast Kitchen. I'm happy to report that I'm doing quite well. Since we spoke last, Alabama pulled through in a big way for a cottage food industry. They have sales cap, so instead of going commercial like I originally planned, because we had punishing annual limits, I decided to continue baking from home, bought larger oven, and I'm baking galore!

[00:31:23] I've about quadrupled the number of subscriptions, and doubled my revenues since we spoke last. I have introduced a new exciting subscription to my customers where I bring them a loaf from a different country every month. I'm baking uh, different pastries now that are selling really well. In other news, since the war in Ukraine, my native country began last year, I have joined the Bake for Ukraine movement and introduced a traditional Ukrainian loaf made

palyanytsya for sale, and all the proceeds from that uh, loaf go to charities that are uh, Ukrainian centered. My customers pulled through for me in a very big way. We have donated together over, \$13,000 worth of goods or monetary donations since the beginning of this, action. And it's still ongoing. People still bring money to the market and... I donate them to the charitable organizations that are focusing on recovering Ukrainians.

[00:32:18] so I'm doing really well and I'm pretty happy to report that, Alabama now has one of the better cottage food laws in the country and I'm taking full advantage of it and pretty happy with it. The next step for me, I guess, would be to, figure out how to teach classes. If I figured that out, that would be great.

[00:32:36] **David Crabill:** So really the opposite of Tina's update Yuliya had been thinking about going commercial, but then Alabama improved their loss. So she didn't have to. And that just shows how important it is for each state to have a really good cottage food law.

[00:32:49] Also, super impressive how much money Yulia has raised for the war in Ukraine. And it's pretty amazing to see what's happened with her business since she was on the show.

[00:32:58] Next up, we have Lisa from Episode 26.

[00:33:03] **Lisa Petrizzi-Geller:** Hi David, it's Lisa Petrizzi Geller from Pop Culture Cake Pops Cookies and Other Confections located in Massachusetts. Since my debut on your podcast, I actually opened up a brick and mortar. So I'm only open Thursdays and Fridays, and I have a small unit that I was lucky enough to rent that had most of the equipment available.

[00:33:30] which saved me a lot of money. I decided to make it more of a studio and then open up only on Thursdays and Fridays. For retail and, foot traffic and for customer pickups. I will open other days when it's um, near a holiday season or special events. It's located in Fall River, Massachusetts, and I'm actually currently looking to, move the location to another spot, which would be in East Freetown, and hopefully I'll know about that within the next month or so. That location will give me more of a bakery style

[00:34:07] storefront, and I'd be open more hours and much more foot traffic compared to what I have now.

[00:34:14] **David Crabill:** Lisa recorded this update a few weeks ago, and I checked in with her, and I'm happy to report that she has now signed the lease

for her new storefront. So that's exciting, and in her episode, she had mentioned that she wanted to expand out of her house, but she was more going to focus on Customer pickups and using the storefront as a production facility, which sounds like what's what she's done, but since then her vision has expanded.

[00:34:39] So it's pretty cool to see where her business is taking her.

[00:34:44] Alright, now we have Jennifer from episode 27.

[00:34:48] **Jennifer Knox:** Hello Forrager podcast. This is Jennifer Knox, the co proprietor of Salt Lickers. I'm so glad that Salt Lickers is still going. Every year we get a little bit bigger, but just bigger enough that we can stand it. And I suppose the biggest news is that another year has gone by and we have not been able.

[00:35:11] To update our website in a way that I've wanted to do it. And I went through a long process with a developer over the last two years. And then I realized that I had been trying to control it as I had with the first incarnation of our website. Which was built by a non professional. AKA me. So my big lesson in that was I have to let the pros do the job that they're good at and I have to stay in my lane.

[00:35:43] And frankly, I'm tired of learning, but it just keeps happening.

[00:35:49] **David Crabill:** Such a dry sense of humor, I think Jennifer is hilarious. in my opinion, she is one of the best copywriters I've had on the show, and I would recommend checking out her website, her blog, her newsletter, she definitely doesn't waste words and it's pretty awesome.

[00:36:05] All right, now let's hear from Jeremy from episode 28.

[00:36:10] **Jeremy Davis:** My name is Jeremy Davis. I'm from Designed by Danny Custom, Cakery in Charlotte, Michigan. So, I was on the show a couple years ago and I'd say a lot has changed since then. I know one of the bigger things is I niched down my business. I went from doing pretty much, everything, birthdays, anniversaries.

[00:36:28] things like that to only specializing in high end wedding cakes, and that has

[00:36:34] really changed my mind about how I set up my business because it's really given me a lot more time to focus on

[00:36:42] Not necessarily the business side of it, but the creative fun side that I like, as well as giving me a lot more time to spend with my family and do all the things that the reason I started a side business was to be able to spend time with my family, pay for gymnastics and dance and all that sort of stuff, gives me the opportunity to actually Enjoy doing those things, going to the meets and things like that, and not being stuck in my kitchen making four or five birthday cakes in a weekend.

[00:37:12] some of the things I've learned from two years ago to moving forward was definitely to, make time for the things that are important. Running a successful business doesn't mean that that's the only thing that I can do. it's not one or all. I can actually have both. I can have the time with my family. I can work a full time job. I can have a successful wedding business. And still be able to sleep and actually go out for dinner and to the movies every once in a while.

[00:37:41] So I, if I were to pull out a crystal ball and sort of look into the future, I really see myself continuing on the path that I'm on. at least for me in the area that I'm in, wedding cakes are not going anywhere. and frankly, they're getting bigger and bigger. People are asking for more crazy and outrageous things.

[00:37:59] So, I'm just going to continue down this path and I truly get to be an artist and I want to continue that moving forward.

[00:38:07] **David Crabill:** Jeremy neglected to mention this, but he is also in grad school right now. So he said that he's able to do all the things and still get sleep. I highly question how much sleep he's actually getting, but it sounds like he's found his niche and things are going super well in its business.

[00:38:23] Next up, Kathy Sing from episode 29.

[00:38:28] **Kathy Sing:** this is Kathy Sing and my business is Kathy's Kernels. I started this business in February of 2014 making caramel corn and figured it would be something I would do for a year. It is now 2023 and I will be celebrating 10 years in business next February. So the big surprise for me is what was meant to be something that would last maybe a year has turned into a much longer vision than anticipated.

[00:38:52] Not only do I continue making various gourmet caramel corn varieties, I also have added toffee, almond clusters, rice krispie treats, and homemade marshmallows.

[00:39:02] Since my last conversation with David, nothing has changed much with the business other than it continues to get busier each year.

[00:39:09] I am also older, approaching 62, I have a 6 month old grandbaby. And another son engaged to be married soon, and my husband retired first of the year. Cost and pricing also has been a big issue this year as we all have dealt with, but I find that if you have a product that people crave and want, they will pay for it.

[00:39:28] I've been fortunate to have found five different sweets that people want more of. That being said, I'm in the beginning stages of selling portions of the business. I still love what I do, but it's becoming harder to spend so many hours in my kitchen, and the timing feels right. I would like to sell the caramel corn first, and then I have interest as well in the Rice Krispies.

[00:39:50] I'm not yet ready to let go of the business entirely for another year. I learned from a dear friend who had a jewelry business for over 30 years, and when she sold it, she went into deep depression. To many of us, our business is our life, and when taken away entirely, the chances of losing your identity, seeing people, having a purpose, etc., goes away. So I'm hoping to avoid that and to do this incrementally. I'm hoping to have sold portions of the business by early next year. I worked with a mentor who helped me through some of this process. Boy, selling a business is stressful. I will keep you posted on how this all goes down.

[00:40:28] **David Crabill:** Such a humble update from Kathy. She actually made over \$90,000 with her business last year, and she has done more sales from a home kitchen than anyone I know. As far as I know, she doesn't have any specialized equipment. She's just using her residential kitchen and still approaching 100, 000 in revenue. I'm definitely looking forward to those updates as she sells her business.

[00:40:56] And now we have Debbie from episode 30.

[00:41:00] **Debbie George:** Hi David and the Forrager community. Thanks so much for inviting me back for an update on cookiemill.com's journey. The last three and a half years have been pretty much a blur since we opened our doors in January, 2020. Coincidentally, almost right when your podcast was debuting, and as you're about to hear, we have truly embodied Cookie Mill's podcast title.

[00:41:19] Go big and go home. We started as a cozy three bedroom home for my son and I, and now it's transformed into what we affectionately call a

commercial home cottage cookie shop. We've been told it's like walking into Willy Wonka's chocolate factory, only for sugar cookies. We have designated rooms and spaces for each major activity, baking and icing production, design and decoration.

[00:41:42] Printing, photography, packaging, and shipping. Company representatives that tour our facility are surprised and amused when they see what we've built when they walk through the door. In numbers, we've produced nearly 60, 000 custom cookies with just myself and one part time assistant who puts in about 24 hours a week, and she is amazing.

[00:42:01] She's the dough and icing wizard and also takes care of cleanup and occasional packaging. My mom has the honorary position of remote CEO. Chief Excellence Officer. She is often the idea sounding board and has generously purchased some of our equipment. Most importantly, she has been my rock, my inspiration, my best friend, and cheerleader through it all.

[00:42:22] We're still on the hunt for another decorator. So if you know any hardworking high schoolers in Gilbert, Arizona, please send them our way. We've officially trademarked Cookie Mill. to prevent other people from trying to use our name since we've invested so heavily in the infrastructure and marketing.

[00:42:37] Being a solopreneur, you find ways to wear many hats and somehow I've managed to put together our website from scratch after paying dearly for failed websites that never produced an order. I also have been juggling the herculean task of not only social media platform education, but also creating the actual content and finding time to post it.

[00:42:56] So what's next? We'll keep expanding our corporate logo and QR code cookie lines, focusing on appreciation and brand recognition for large events in Arizona.

[00:43:05] CookieMill.com, where your customers will taste the passion, see the vision, and feel your gratitude.

[00:43:12] **David Crabill:** Wow, that sounds like quite the home setup there at Debbie's house. Pretty crazy. And also crazy, Debbie recently told me that she did more sales in the past six weeks than she did in her entire first year of business. And she told me on her initial episode that her entire first year of business, she sold 10, 000 cookies.

[00:43:33] So does that mean she sold 10, 000 cookies in the past six weeks? Probably not. She's probably referring to revenue and I'm sure she's increased her prices over the last couple years, but still, She's obviously making a lot of cookies out of that house. Pretty impressive.

[00:43:48] And now let's hear from Safeera from episode 33.

[00:43:53] **Safeera Inayath:** Well, hello, this is Safeera Inayath from Sugardust and Sprinkles. things have changed in terms of my business. with my, uh, social media, I lost. I lost my account. One year ago, my account was hacked through Facebook marketplace.

[00:44:09] so my Facebook account and my Instagram account were all wiped off and I had to restart all over again.

[00:44:17] it was a really sad, sad feeling after working so hard and building the business through social media

[00:44:25] I would've cried for like a week, but then the day it got hacked, I opened a new account. In the next few hours I sent out a message that my account is hacked. I wanted everybody to share my information on Instagram so that Instagram could help me get back my account. But, Around that time, it was pretty common and a lot of bakers and other creative makers were losing their accounts through hackers.

[00:44:51] So, it was like quite a norm at that time. Anyways, I started my account right away. I started posting old pictures and videos of what I had.

[00:45:02] And, it's not been easy for me, now it's like really slow and probably I'm not putting in as much effort as before, But more than followers, I need clients. And for that, I have to show my face and sell my product. So I started doing a lot of, Markets and events so that, my business is like shown everywhere. And I started reaching out to. Different, uh, organizations, just, last, Easter, I got a very big, order from Nordstrom. I do have my old clients who come back to me for, desserts and treats. So, that's going well.

[00:45:40] and as the holidays are approaching, I'm gonna start selling my products in the markets, so yeah, that's about it. And, hopefully I do better by this end of the year and the following year.

[00:45:52] **David Crabill:** I am so glad that Safeera came to share an update, because I saw way back when that this happened to her, where she got hacked.

And it's been a year and a half now since then, so a lot of the emotion is gone, but I highly recommend that you go back and watch the post that she made on the day that it happened, and I will post a link to this video in the show notes for this episode, but it's so real, it's so authentic and I think is a good lesson at understanding the risk of building a business around a platform that you don't own. So I remember on the podcast and her initial interview, she said that she got about 80 percent of her sales through Instagram. But give her credit because she did rebuild it. She now has almost 4,000 followers. She did have over 10,000 followers at the time. She mentioned in this update that she hasn't been putting as much effort into Instagram. And that might be why she hasn't regained all the followers. Probably true. I looked back and it looks like she was, for the first, I don't know, year or so, posting about once or twice per day. And on her initial interview, she revealed that she was posting four to five times per day, which is insane. So, it's a good comparison point because while I don't think four to five times per day is sustainable and I wouldn't recommend it, it probably did help allow her Instagram page to take off like it did. But anyway, I really appreciate her sharing, and I'm super impressed that she did not give up.

[00:47:27] Alright, next up we have Jennifer from episode 34.

[00:47:32] **Jennifer Jacobs:** Hey guys, it's Jennifer Jacobs from Wandering Whisk Bakeshop in Florida. Since I last talked to y'all, everything has been amazing with us. So we've been teaching more classes, doing a lot of really fun classes, focusing on, you know, cake decorating and macarons and cream puffs. We've been focusing on a lot of larger events, so we do a ton of weddings, corporate events.

[00:47:57] We've gotten to work with a local music venue and do events for their grand opening. It's been really amazing just kind of focusing on these larger scale events and a little less on smaller events, which we still do, but just not quite as often. I'm always kind of just sharpening my skills and watching videos, reading books, really just trying to keep up on the latest trends, but also really just pushing myself to learn new things and to always be offering, you know, new techniques and color palettes and different kinds of things to my clients, which is always really fun.

[00:48:32] And then I would say the main thing is. I love traveling and traveling has always been a real source of inspiration for my business, hence the name Wandering Whisk. So I've really gotten to travel, I've seen a lot of the world in the last year, and I bring a lot of that inspiration back into the bakery and come up with new recipes.

[00:48:51] And we just had a really amazing event. It was called a pastry passport pop up event and everything that I made for that event was all inspired by my travels around the world. So, you know, just trying to keep things fresh, just, you know, every time someone visits the bakery, I want there to be new things in the case, new inspiration, new ideas, just constantly happening.

[00:49:12] So yeah, I'm really excited to share that with you guys and thanks for chatting.

[00:49:17] **David Crabill:** Jennifer's update here actually matches pretty much exactly what she said she wanted to do when she was last on the podcast. She said she wanted to do more classes. She said she wanted to do more traveling. It sounds like she's done exactly that. so that is awesome, and also here's a fun fact,

[00:49:33] Jennifer is the only person who initially declined the opportunity to be on the podcast and then later said yes. Now a lot of people say no to being on the podcast. In fact, I'd say the majority of the people I reach out to say no for one reason or another. But when I first reached out to Jen, I only had about a dozen episodes under my belt and she was a super top prospect for me because she had a great story, she had a great business, and she also had a ton of media experience. She was a very good speaker. So she was definitely a top prospect for me, but with only a dozen episodes under my belt at that time, I sort of knew. That I hadn't really proven myself enough. So I came back a year later. By that point, I had over 30 episodes in the books. I had had Liz Marek on the show at that point. And so she said, yes, and I'm so grateful that she did.

[00:50:19] alright now we have Nathan from episode 35.

[00:50:24] **Nathan Parchman:** Hi, I'm Nathan Parchman. I'm with Nitro Family Foods. It's and a half years since we were on the podcast, and we were trying to open up a small commercial kitchen and take our business to the next level because we had outgrown our house with the cottage food, so we we needed to get more space and then have a commercial kitchen where we could expand ourselves.

[00:50:44] It's been two, well, I think right at two years we've had the kitchen actually open and we have grown it where we have about six to seven renters, because we're not there all the time because we have day jobs, but we rent the kitchen space out to people that are jumping out of the cottage food and need a commercial kitchen.

[00:51:02] So that's some additional income we get there from our commercial kitchen. Uh, the product sales, we've hit a point where it's. We're either going to have to expand or stay where we're at and kind of stay as a boutique, because we've got people requesting to put it in stores here and there, and we don't really have a good distribution method, set up yet that would be feasible for, uh, cost wise.

[00:51:23] With our production. So right now we're kind of in the holdings pattern. We haven't really seen a big increase over the last two years in our sales. But we did hire one to two employees, which when you hire people that cost more, but it gives you some freedom to not have to be At the kitchen cooking, until 10 or 11 o'clock every night.

[00:51:43] So it has, uh, freed us up quite a bit with that. So the employees, that's, that's another thing you gotta figure out how to do the W 2s and the taxes and figure out what programs you want to use with that. So with that growth, there's always more, more headaches that come with it. But, if you want to expand and grow, you've got to take the plunge, and that's what we've kind of done.

[00:52:02] So, that's really about what we got going. We've expanded, now we have a ghost pepper salsa. So, that's our fifth level of heat. So, we have expanded that product, but we're still basic on the, chips, our salsa. we do have pizza and barbecue sauce, but that's not like our focus, and then our pickles, so that's, that's our offering, and, uh, that's expanded a little bit, I think, since the last time.

[00:52:26] I can't remember when we brought what product lines out, but that, uh, the chips have been extremely successful. We cook those in house, but right now I think we're happy we can handle what we've got without, just absolutely having zero time left in the day. we're, we're at a comfortable spot and going forward, I don't think we're gonna expand any of our product offerings because, kind of stick to what you're good at, but we have done a little bit more in the catering area where we cater events and we have fun doing that because we've got the commercial kitchen so we can be considered basically a food truck with a tent, and so we've done several of the catering events and that's, that's been a lot of fun.

[00:53:00] **David Crabill:** I'd say that that update was a little bit subdued. They've done a lot of things in the last couple years, obviously, on the episode, they were still in the process of building out their kitchen, so they could only do direct orders. They couldn't do any wholesale that time.

[00:53:13] They now do wholesale, and they do quite a bit of it. It sounds like they're pretty maxed out on that front.

[00:53:18] also on their episode. Nathan estimated that it was gonna cost over \$160,000 000 to retrofit their brick and mortar, and at the time I thought that sounded really high, but now I've seen the before and after pictures of their space and I can completely understand why it costs that much, probably more.

[00:53:34] It is amazing what they did to this old building, so I will post a link to the before and after pictures of that in the show notes, and I think you're going to be blown away, but now that they have a commercial kitchen. As Nathan kind of mentioned, they operate as a food truck sometimes. So they sell a lot of things other than salsa. Obviously salsa and pickles are their main focus, but they sell hot dogs. They sell macaroni and cheese. They sell nachos. nachos and chili and popcorn and cotton candy and lasagna and all sorts of things that they never could have sold under the cottage food realm. So they have definitely expanded in that way too. He said they have employees, their stores open quite a lot, especially in the summer and holiday times. They also now ship nationwide, so there's a lot that's happened with their business over the last couple years.

[00:54:19] And also said in this update that they are now renting their kitchen out to about six or seven other food business owners. And they had said in their episode that that was something that they initially wanted to do until they learned that it was going to quadruple their insurance costs. And they even said on their episode that they doubted that they would ever be able to rent out their kitchen to anyone else.

[00:54:39] So what changed? I asked Nathan about it and he said they've made it work by having the food businesses get their own insurance and they are added as additional insured onto their insurance. So Instead of ensuring everybody in the kitchen. Everyone has their own insurance and that spreads out the cost. So it doesn't all fall on them. So I'm glad to see that they found a way to make that work and overall amazing progress from both of them.

[00:55:04] I don't know how they pack it all in, but I am looking forward to seeing where their business goes from here.

[00:55:10] All right, now we have Beverly Clutter from episode 36

[00:55:15] **Beverly Clutter:** Hello, Beverly from West Virginia Cookie Jar here. Since I was last on the show, things have changed. I am spending less time

baking because I run two trauma from infidelity groups. I had the opportunity to do this because I'm taking less orders, but I'm still making the same money. I realized my talent deserved to be monetized and I needed to charge what my products were worth.

[00:55:39] So, I've raised my prices to match my local competitors. Sometimes a little higher. I was nervous about the change initially, but then I saw the results and couldn't be happier with the results. Seriously, why was I working so hard and truly not paying myself what I was worth? I've learned along the way, the big box stores and grocery stores are not my competitors.

[00:56:04] I could never make products for the price they do. Also, they don't make the freshest, locally sourced, delicious products that I make. There's a customer for every price point, and not every customer is meant for me, and that is okay.

[00:56:20] **David Crabill:** I first heard about Beverly because she was the most active attendee at the first Cottage Food Conference. the conference portal had a point system where you could see how active somebody was.

[00:56:33] And why that's significant is because Beverly was at a stage at that point where she was just gobbling information up. And we often hear entrepreneurs say, charge what you're worth, raise your prices.

[00:56:44] as she said, she was hesitant to raise her prices. But what's cool about this is that Beverly actually, I'm guessing, Took the information she was getting from others, applied it, and then saw results.

[00:56:56] And it's great to hear that Beverly is doing so well with her business.

[00:57:01] Next up, we have Jim from episode 37.

[00:57:06] **Jim Whitmarsh:** Hey, this is Jim and Crystal Whitmarsh from Trail Creek Coffee Roasters in Cassin, Minnesota. Uh, we were on the podcast a couple of years ago, to give you an update of what we've been up to since then, we, decided that, we want to continue to grow. And so, purchasing our building was, the next big step for us.

[00:57:26] Which we, did that in May of 2022, and then more recently, this past April, we went ahead and, and had a rooftop solar power system installed to generate, all of our electricity needs, It produces an excess to power about four to five medium sized homes, which is pretty cool.

[00:57:47] We've also invested back into the business. Um, we purchased some auxiliary equipment such as, uh, a destoner and a packaging machine which just helps us to increase our throughput.

[00:58:00] and we've, we've gained a few more, wholesale accounts as well over the last couple of years. we've really adopted the, mindset that slow and steady finishes the race. And so we're, we're just really, um, trusting the process. we're, we're not trying to do it all. Overnight, we're, we're just, um, we're taking it one step at a time and, enjoying the journey.

[00:58:21] **David Crabill:** In Jim and Crystal's episode, they said they had just recently started to have a change of heart. For the longest time, the goal was to eventually open up a traditional coffee shop, open five, six days a week, but they said they were starting to reconsider that and maybe focus on a wholesale model instead. And it sounds like from their update here, That's exactly what they've done and it's working out really well for them.

[00:58:47] I also loved Jim's comment about how he and Crystal are just enjoying the journey and not trying to grow too fast. And it certainly sounds like they will finish the race.

[00:58:59] Alright, next up we have Anne from episode 38.

[00:59:04] **Anne Reist:** Hi, my name is Anne Reist. I'm the owner of The Chocolate Palette in Salt Lake City, Utah. A lot has changed since I've been on this podcast. The Chocolate Palette as a business has continued to grow, which I've been very happy about. One of the ways that I've invested in my business is by buying more molds so that I can make larger batches and increase my production capacity without a whole lot more input of time.

[00:59:32] So I've continued to produce more and more each year. Additionally, I've hired some friends to come in and help me seasonally to pack boxes and wash dishes and help me sell at markets. So that's been a big change that's been really positive. Additionally, I've sold at some bigger markets than I've ever sold at before.

[00:59:56] This past year, one of the highlights was selling at the Chocolate and Cheese Festival in Salt Lake City. There were three of us. Selling for two days straight and it was a wonderful market with all kinds of past customers and future customers and just a really good client base. And it was so fun to get to meet people and have conversations with them.

[01:00:20] So doing larger markets like that is new and enjoyable, but it's also a lot of work. So. I do that sometimes. Things have shifted a little bit as far as certain markets have dropped off since COVID times, and then other ones have picked up. So overall, it's been a net gain and the business is still going well.

[01:00:42] **David Crabill:** One thing that was really unique about Anne in her episode is that She didn't have any specific goals for the future for her business. And this goes along the same lines as what Jim was talking about in the last update about enjoying the journey.

[01:00:58] she said and I quote as long as it's growing and doing well Then just keep on keeping on and get better at my craft and try to give the best customer service I can I feel like happy customers will keep driving my business and that's good enough for me right now So she really embodies that spirit of not getting ahead of herself, taking it one step at a time and just appreciating where she's at. And I have a feeling that's a big part of her success.

[01:01:24] alright, now we have Sari from episode 39.

[01:01:29] **Sari Stevenson:** Hi, I'm Sari Stevenson, the former owner of The Keto Bakery Box. The Keto Bakery Box was born, if you will, about six years ago. I started as a cottage food bakery, and if you heard my original recording, I did move on to a commercial bakery. And we were in business as a commercial bakery for about three years, extremely successful.

[01:01:54] And about a year and a half ago, things really started slowing down And, it got to the point where I had to start laying off employees,, taxes were skyrocketing, insurance, workman's comp, etc. was skyrocketing, and not to mention the, requirements on commercial bakeries through the state of California and also on a local level within Orange County.

[01:02:20] I did try to keep the bakery going, for a while. In September of 2022, my husband and I decided that we were going to move to Arizona and my business partner did run the bakery for a few months but it got to a point where it was very, taxing and it was not profitable. We started losing money, so we decided to shut it down.

[01:02:43] It was a super hard decision to make. but without the business, people don't have the discretionary, funding like they used to. We were very specialized in what we did. And it just became very hard to do business. So, that is where I am at today. I have considered reopening in the state of Arizona, but

that is not a decision, to take lightly, and it's just somewhere there on the back burner.

[01:03:14] I'm leaning towards not. I don't think that the times are what they used to be, and I just don't know that I'm prepared to start over again. However, I have absolutely zero regrets for the time that I did walk the bakery. It was, wonderful, thoroughly enjoyed my work and my customers.

[01:03:35] It's definitely something that I do miss on a day to day basis in some aspects. But in others, it's, confirmed that I absolutely did make the right decision.

[01:03:47] **David Crabill:** initially Sari declined to participate in this episode because she said she felt like her update was too negative. And I responded to her and I said, hey, I don't need this episode to be all good stuff, I just want it to be authentic and real. Because the reality is that sometimes things don't go well. Sometimes businesses fail. and that is represented in a number of the stories that you're hearing in this episode.

[01:04:12] So I really appreciate Sari coming on and sharing that honest update, and I'm sure you do, too.

[01:04:17] And now we have Justina from episode 40.

[01:04:22] **Justina Rucinski:** This is Justina with Sweetems. I run a cookie business and when I last talked to y'all, I was very interested in really wanting to get more into teaching. Well, it's been two years now and I'm happy to say that I am a full blown teacher. I offer a lot of online courses and just coming next year, I'm going to be teaching some major events in my local area and hopefully I want to eventually get to the point where I can travel as well.

[01:04:55] In this past couple of years, well, a lot of things have happened in my life personally. I know I spoke about to y'all about my story regarding my trauma, so my story regarding my trauma was also aired on Lifetime, so that is now, basically, that story is worldwide, and The reason why I chose to do it was to continue to, you know, keep women safe and be aware, but also it has also helped further change laws in multiple states in the cottage community.

[01:05:28] So that happened. And also the person who, attacked me passed away in prison which was a very freeing feeling for me.

[01:05:39] Um, It definitely helped me in my healing process with my work and my personal life. So, well, I, I hate to, I'm human and I don't want to ever, you know Celebrate someone, you know, a human's life. I, I do want to, to be able to celebrate my sense of freedom and that has given me. A huge sense of relief in my life, in my children's life, and in the people I love.

[01:06:05] So that happened just recently this year. I'm still working. I no longer do that many custom orders. I still do custom orders, but I very much have limited them.

[01:06:17] My prices have definitely gone up from when I last spoke to you. And I still get orders, but I'm just kind of pickier about what I choose because I mostly teach now that has become a big part of my business. And I'm learning to just kind of go for things, like, I was really wanting to teach and finally I just did it, and I was like, well, I don't know if people want to learn from me, I don't know if this is going to be successful, but we're just going to do it, because this is what I want to do, so, like, it's not going to hurt if I at least try, and it has been very successful, and I'm very surprised how many students I have enrolled in my classes, so I guess my biggest advice to any owner, business owner, or, you know, a cookier is to just go for it.

[01:07:01] Do not allow your fear to hinder you because you never know what's going to happen. And it really has changed my life and my way of thinking of when I just let go of that fear of the unknown and just really go for it and take the risk because it's absolutely paid off for my, my life and for my business.

[01:07:21] **David Crabill:** How does Justina talk so eloquently about such difficult topics? It just blows my mind, just as she did in her initial interview, which Honestly, had me in tears. If you haven't listened to her episode, I highly recommend that you do.

[01:07:36] And in that episode, she did talk about how she wanted to explore teaching more. And it's awesome to see that that's exactly what she's done and it's working out so well for her. Now, Justina's update was actually longer than this. I shortened it for brevity's sake, but she talked about what it was like to appear on Lifetime, lots of really interesting stuff in that clip. now I will be sharing that clip in the coming weeks via my newsletter. If you want to be notified, you can get on my email list by signing up for my free mini course at cottagefoodcourse.com, and once I share it via the newsletter, then I will also post a link to that clip in the show notes for this episode.

[01:08:18] Alright, moving on. Now we have Eric from episode 41.

[01:08:23] **Eric Sorensen:** Hi, this is Eric Sorensen of Clumsy Crow Baking in Pullman, Washington. I had a surprise earlier this year. My homeowner's insurance company threatened to stop covering us as long as I was letting customers pick up bread at my door. Switching insurers was going to cost me \$1,000 more a year, and since I'm a pretty low frequency baker anyway, I didn't plan on enough income to make that worthwhile.

[01:08:47] I was actually going to quit cottage baking altogether and uh, just not renew my permit. And my wife noted that renewing the permit is easy enough and would pay for itself with one bake. So now customers pick up their bread, bagels, and pretzels at occasional pop ups like uh, Pretzel Night at a Taproom and uh, the Pullman Farmer's Market, which is great.

[01:09:07] You know, after baking alone for hours, it's nice to interact with dozens of customers. Uh, The money's actually impressive. I still think this is a great gateway to a brick and mortar enterprise but as I've said before, I don't want to work that hard, so I'm deliberately baking less with fewer loaves of bread and lots of pretzels, which can make dozens of people happy.

[01:09:30] **David Crabill:** That's definitely the first time I've heard of a homeowner's insurance company threatening to drop a customer because they have a cottage food business. I've definitely heard of them saying they'd increase the rates a little bit, but to drop them entirely, I'm not really sure what they are concerned of for people picking up bread from a doorstep.

[01:09:48] But anyway, I'm glad Eric is still continuing to run his business.

[01:09:52] I remember in his episode, he made it sound so nice where he spent all morning baking, put the bread out for pickup, and then went to sleep while customers picked up their orders. Definitely doesn't sound like he can do that anymore, But I'm glad he's found a way to make this business work.

[01:10:08] Now let's hear from April Spencer from episode 42.

[01:10:13] **April Spencer:** Hey, you guys, it's April from Spencer's Sugar Shop. So since we've last talked, a few things that have changed, I now have three kids in school.

[01:10:21] Three out of three are in school. My smallest is now in preschool three days a week. So I have three days a week with the house free to get all of this crazy baking done.

[01:10:32] Business is going great. It really could not be going better. I'm really lucky to have a great community. But the biggest lessons that I've learned since I've talked to you guys last is, is sticking with your guns um, sticking to who you are, what you want your business to be, what you want it to look like, because as things get good for you, there's going to be people that want to come along, and it's not your job to take them with you, it's your job to Do your business, stick to what you need to do and then also leave when it's not right.

[01:11:06] Leave situations when it's not right for you, So elaborate on that, I went in with a group of friends on a project that I was really, really excited about.

[01:11:16] it was supposed to essentially make my job as a cake baker easier.

[01:11:21] and then, Unfortunately um, deadlines weren't getting met payments weren't being paid

[01:11:27] and after lots and lots and lots of anxiety and stressing about it I decided that it just wasn't the best option for me anymore, just because it was causing so much anxiety. And when I left the

[01:11:41] project, instantly another project came to me that was bigger, more regular dates communication is better, things like that. So that was my thing is, learning to leave bad business relationship

[01:11:55] and that opens up doors for even more possibilities.

[01:11:59] Uh, So that's something that we're really proud of around here, is we are the preferred cake lady. I'm the preferred cake lady at almost all of the large venues around in my area. So remember that you have to leave bad situations to get into good situations, and it will be worth it.

[01:12:16] **David Crabill:** clearly, April has a lot of relationships and connections in her local community. And I'm sure that is a big part of her success. And it's interesting to see how maybe that leads to difficult situations sometimes, but it's important to note that April is a people please or she hates saying no to anybody.

[01:12:32] In fact, in her episode, she said that saying no is something she has had to learn. So I think that was a big part of it too here is that it was against the very grain and fiber of her being to do what was right for the business.

[01:12:44] And honestly, that's something that a lot of entrepreneurs have to learn. Now, April did elaborate a bit more about this. In her update, I cut it down for brevity's sake for this episode, but in particular, she talked about another situation with a business friend that was challenging. And so I have separated that out into a separate clip and much like Justina, I will share that in the coming weeks via my newsletter.

[01:13:06] And once I do, I will put that as a link down in the show notes notes. But April did say in that clip that these two instances were just a drop in the bucket compared to all of the great things that have been happening this year.

[01:13:17] And I'm so glad to hear that her business is going so well.

[01:13:21] All right, now let's hear from Kourtney Rojas from episode 43

[01:13:26] **Kourtney Rojas:** Hi David, hi listeners. So happy to be back on to give you a quick update in regards to what has been going on in my cottage food business With Love From Scratch. My original episode aired in 2021 and since then I am still focused on family, freedom, and pie. I love what I do, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

[01:13:54] I would say that I don't have any exciting, crazy updates as far as opening a brick and mortar or getting a commercial kitchen. I have actually chosen to stay in my home kitchen. As a cottage baker. And I am very, very, very happy with that. I did hire an employee. Her name is Alice. She comes and helps me twice a week, sometimes three times a week.

[01:14:19] I'd say that's one of my biggest accomplishments, if that's what you want to call it, was finding Alice. To help me, letting somebody help me, hiring someone to help me. I know it's hard when we're working in our house. That was kind of a hang up that I had for a long time was letting a quote stranger into my house, but it's been amazing.

[01:14:41] I've been able to join the PTA at my kid's school and just on a week to week basis, have less stress of how are all these things going to get done. I did kind of make a verbal declaration with my family that just because I hired an employee didn't mean I wanted to put more on my plate. So, I've really just been focusing on keeping the joy of creating and baking pies on a relatively small scale and not getting sucked into the do more, be more, have more, build more, and just kind of taking it one bake at a time and enjoying exactly where I am.

[01:15:19] **David Crabill:** Sometimes I go down to Orange County for Thanksgiving, which is where Kourtney lives, and I remember a couple years ago, I thought,, oh, I'll buy one of her pies for our Thanksgiving meal. And this was weeks before Thanksgiving and she was completely sold out for Thanksgiving orders. I think when she opens up orders for Thanksgiving, it only takes a day or two for her to be completely sold out. So there's definitely a lot of demand for Courtney's pies and I'm really glad to hear that hired an employee. In my opinion, that's one thing that entrepreneurs often don't do soon enough. I know she was relying a lot on family help, but I'm glad to hear that it's allowed her business to continue moving forward without taking up so much of her time.

[01:16:03] And speaking of not hiring soon enough, that leads us right into our next guest, Daniela from episode 46.

[01:16:12] **Daniela Zographos:** Hi, this is Daniela Zographos and I used to own Yumsies Cake Pops. I say I used to because a lot has changed since I last recorded my episode here. I closed my business at the beginning of this year. I felt like it was... A long time coming, but at the same time, super shocked I actually went through with it.

[01:16:34] I ran a very successful cake pop business from my home, and it got to a point where I outgrew my kitchen and I was getting very burnt out doing it by myself. I'm a stay at home mom, so all of my baking was done at night, so I didn't know how I could hire someone or how I could grow it um, with my limitations.

[01:16:55] So as I stated in my episode, I became really good friends with the owner of Stover Company, a bakery supply distributor based out of Pittsburgh. I'm in South Carolina. And over the years, we developed a great relationship. And I never thought I would work for someone else, especially in a corporate setting as I loved Being my own boss and setting my own hours and doing what I needed to do for myself.

[01:17:25] But it got to the point where I outgrew my operation and I couldn't take that next step into opening a brick and mortar that I reached out and I got a job with them. And so now I work remotely I am their in house pastry chef. I do a lot of product support, for them. And I also manage a few accounts.

[01:17:47] So I get to travel to different confectionary and chocolate expos around the country. So it's been a great change. Still a little surprised that I took that step, but so happy I did. I love what I do. I get to be on the other side of the industry, you know, the distribution and sales part of it.

[01:18:05] And it's very, very rewarding. One day I would like to come back and finish what I started with my business and do it properly with an actual brick and mortar, but for now this is it and I've learned a lot along the way, especially trust yourself. Trust your instincts, know your boundaries, and know when to stop.

[01:18:29] That was the hardest one. You need to listen to your body, listen to your mind, and know when to stop doing something you really love and take a leap of faith into something else that you might love even more.

[01:18:44] **David Crabill:** The title of Daniela's episode was Mom by Day, Baker by Night. and in her episode, she said that her baking hours were between 9pm and 3am. And that her kids woke up around 6. 30am. And I just remember thinking, this is unsustainable. And I think, uh, what happened here is Daniella just had a very super successful business on her hands, but it was super important for her to stay at home with the kids. So right now it's probably the right decision to have this job. She can work remotely, she can stay at home. And then I definitely could see someday maybe when the kids are out of the house or older, her picking this back up and opening up a brick and mortar, like she said. And I'm sure if she does that, she'll be quite successful.

[01:19:31] Alright, now we have Anthony from episode 47.

[01:19:35] **Anthony Rosemond:** hi, my name is Anthony Rosemond and I'm the CEO and French chef at Pastries. We talked a while back with David and uh, we are an online macaron store. Since then we've launched a wholesale program and corporate program as well. What we do is we have partners all over the United States that are now able to uh, purchase our macarons from our store and, you know, we sell them on their site.

[01:19:59] I think with the situation worldwide, you know, with the food getting expensive, people tend to focus more on what they actually need, and that's, understandable. So we're, we're seeing a B2C business to customer person, not buying anywhere like we were at the beginning, like a few years ago but more B2B.

[01:20:19] So it's more business to business. So corporate sales are, you know, coming up and uh, direct to customer are going down. So it's kind of compensating, but it's surprising. You know, I thought we would stay uh, you know, direct to customer. And now we're seeing the corporate side of business growing.

[01:20:37] And the other side of the business now, we just actually recently acquired an um, macaron printer. So that's very, very cool for corporate events and holiday gifts. So we can basically print anything on top of the macarons. So it can be a logo or anything like that.

[01:20:52] So yeah, Ben, this is very, very new and we're gonna, you know, promote that towards the end of the year with the holiday season as well. So basically that's everything that's new with Pastreez.

[01:21:01] **David Crabill:** Similar to what I mentioned with Dawn earlier, I also saw Anthony and his wife randomly, while looking online, they were on an ad for SEMrush, that's an SEO tool that he talked about in his episode.

[01:21:16] So it's cool to see some of these business owners being featured by these big brands.

[01:21:21] Definitely interesting to hear Anthony talk about how his model has shifted to wholesale. if you recall in his episode, their online sales were blowing up and I sort of speculate if that was partly due to the pandemic and more people finding and buying things online and now maybe people are in stores and so now the wholesale model is working better for them.

[01:21:42] But, whatever the case, obviously they are adapting and finding a way to make it work.

[01:21:48] Alright, now let's hear from Tracy from episode 49.

[01:21:51] **Tracy Mancuso:** Hi, this is Tracy Mancuso here with Sugar Rush. I've actually had a lot going on over the past year. Last year we were able to do a complete kitchen remodel and add on to our kitchen. And I now have custom workspace with a baking pantry. So I can store everything in the same area and I have a ton of new space that I can close off when it's not in use.

[01:22:15] And then I added a decorating island and I put my kitchen sink in the island so cleanup is a ton easier. I now have double ovens and can bake much more quickly and more efficiently. We also added solar panels to offset energy costs and replaced our heating and cooling system. Everything is counter height so I don't have to bend over like I used to and I can stand or sit if I want to, to work.

[01:22:41] And it's added to my overall productivity. I'm a lot less tired after a work day, and it's been really exciting to see the design that I came up with in

my head actually work for me. I have had to listen to my body more. About a year ago, my shoulder was in constant pain and I developed tennis elbow in both arms.

[01:23:00] So I started seeing a massage therapist and she's been working with me on posture and correcting a lot of issues in my neck and back. You don't really realize how hard this kind of work is on your body until you develop certain conditions that cause a lot of pain. Thankfully the massage therapy has been working really well, and I'm feeling a lot better.

[01:23:19] I am learning to slow down and listen to my emotional and physical needs more. Working from home and spending most of my day working alone has its unique challenges, but I still do love what I do. And I feel that my business is still growing, and I am also growing as a person.

[01:23:36] **David Crabill:** In Tracy's episode, she talked about using old appliances in a dark kitchen and wanting to upgrade that, so it's awesome to hear that she has done that, and I'm sure people are jealous here at what her kitchen setup is like now, but she is producing a lot of cakes and obviously is able to reinvest some of that money.

[01:23:56] And it has some consequences too. They talked about the physical issues. A number of my guests have talked about that. So I'm glad she's found a solution that's working for her and is able to continue running her thriving business.

[01:24:08] Now we have Jennie from episode 55.

[01:24:13] **Jennie Gibson:** Hi, this is Jennie Gibson, owner of The Cake Pop Shop. One of the great things about owning a cottage food business is that as life changes, you can adjust your business to work around your personal needs. This year my dad was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and we moved him in with us so we could help take care of him and get him to his appointments and manage his medical needs.

[01:24:35] And owning my own business has really allowed me to make the adjustments that I need to be able to do that. And it's really great to be able to be there for him. So one of the things that I did was I reduced my menu. I got rid of the chocolate covered Oreos, Rice Krispie Treats, pretzels, apples, and all those things.

[01:24:52] And I'm really only focusing on cake pops. I'm doing the orders that I want to do and that are easier to do. I'm only taking about three or four orders a week. But what I'm really doing is focusing on those holiday pre sales. And that's where I make my most money. So I can design orders that I like, that I can do quickly.

[01:25:09] And customers order a bunch of them, and that money can carry me on for a few months, so I can relax a little bit more and focus on my dad and what his needs are. I'm also getting a chance to focus on some of my goals that I've always had for myself. For example, I've always wanted to be in Cake Masters magazine.

[01:25:26] You don't see that a lot when it comes to cake pops. So last month, out of the blue, they featured one of my designs and that was really exciting. So I've decided maybe I'll apply and do some tutorials for the magazine as well. I'm trying to focus on getting my reels up and focusing more on social media and maybe just making tutorials and getting back to my creative roots and just doing it because I love it and it's fun.

[01:25:49] I'm also trying to work on my YouTube channel, building that up a little bit more. So when things get back on track, I'm ready to go, my social media is up, and I can start diving in the way I used to before. In the meantime, I'm slowing down and focusing on what needs to be focused on right now, and that's family.

[01:26:06] **David Crabill:** I sort of question what Jennie actually means when she says slowing down because if you recall in her episode she talked about doing orders of over a thousand cake pops each. so, maybe a large 100 cake pop order would be slowing down for her, I don't know. But, Jenny also talked on her episode about wanting to teach more, and she was one of the speakers at the cottage food conference this year, so that was cool to see.

[01:26:31] Now we have Scot Steenson from episode 57.

[01:26:36] **Scot Steenson:** Hey, this is Scot and Christine with Road Roaster Coffee. Boy, it's been an incredible last few years since we spoke. We just got back from Louisiana with our new coffee roaster. So we started out with a 500 gram roaster, and now we have a 12 kilogram roaster. And we're installing it into our new space in Paradise, California.

[01:26:56] It's going to be such a pleasure to have our coffee roasting business in the town where we originally resided. This town is going through an absolute

beautiful transformation since the fire, and we're just happy and blessed to be part of that. We're seeing our business grow in areas that we enjoy. The farmer's market has really helped.

[01:27:17] us grow as people, as individuals, but most importantly, as a company, we've really been able to make inroads with our community and help achieve, adherence to our four pillars, community, charity, coffee, and fun. We've also seen growth in some white label projects that we've had regarding doing coffee for entertainers worldwide known entertainers.

[01:27:38] So that's been fun, but also has create unique opportunities. But really in the end, everything has been absolutely incredible just because we've come so far but we've done that with the most beautiful and incredible customer base you could ask for. Our customers are there for us and we're there for them.

[01:27:58] It's been a beautiful relationship and we're just having an incredible time growing.

[01:28:01] **David Crabill:** Wow, a 12 kilogram roaster. I remember on their episode, they had just purchased a 5 kilogram roaster for about 20, 000. So now a year and a half later, they've been able to upgrade to the 12 kilogram. And I've seen a picture of this thing and it is huge. It's literally taller than a person. So, sounds like they continue to make huge progress, and also amazing to hear that they are opening up a location in Paradise and helping rebuild that community.

[01:28:33] They definitely have one of the most incredible entrepreneurial journeys that I have ever heard.

[01:28:39] Now let's hear from Beatrice from episode 58.

[01:28:44] **Beatrice Lattimore:** Hey, my name is Beatrice Lattimore, owner of Our Vision Farm and Beatz Sweets. A lot has changed since the last episode was recorded. We find ourselves now in a whole new state. We have moved our business from Florida to Maine. So we just recently purchased Our new property that we're going to be farming on and starting our cottage food business on once again.

[01:29:09] We now have 16 acres here in Kingman, Maine, and we're going to focus on raising meat, chickens, vegetables, planting as many fruit trees as possible. I'm also going to be opening our cottage food business again, but we're just naming our business. Our vision farm and bakery, moving forward, instead of Beatz Sweets, I thought it would just fit in better all together.

[01:29:34] And we still plan on opening our home bakery where I bake breads and other, like, sweet baked goods, and making our homemade jams as well. We plan on having a farm shop on the property. The property has a perfect little garage that we're going to change into like a little farm store, and it's right off the road.

[01:29:55] It has good traffic, so we're very excited for all the new changes coming. We're in a whole different environment, have to learn different seasons, and it's going to be a big learning curve, but we feel like our business is really going to Boom and expand here. We're pretty much starting all the way from scratch.

[01:30:14] So that is going to be a lot of work But we're very excited to see what happens here in Maine But the base of our business is still going to remain the same trying to grow food on our land and making all the homemade goods as well. So that is the updates for now. We're very excited. Follow us, and you can watch us grow from scratch here in a whole different state.

[01:30:37] **David Crabill:** Sure seems like a lot of cottage food entrepreneurs are moving. Beatrice is the 6th guest so far to say that they moved houses and 5 of those moved out of state. that's kind of interesting. But even though it's gonna be a lot of work, Beatrice gonna be able to take all that she learned from her old farm and apply it to her new one. And I'm forward to seeing updates as she progresses with that.

[01:31:02] Next up, Diana from episode 62.

[01:31:06] **Diana Blaylock:** My name is Diana Blaylock, and my business was called Mama's Best Bakery. since my episode, last year, I had a major surgery in the spring. and all the downtime while I recovered gave us a lot of time to really think about what we wanted life to look like for our family. and after a lot of prayer, a lot of talking, we decided to close the business.

[01:31:31] after that, a lot of things fell into place, like we were going to have a bookstore with our bakery when we found a location, but now we had a whole storage unit full of books and nothing to do with them, so we were able to sell those to another local store that sells used books, and that was very exciting.

[01:31:51] and we were able to sell all of our big equipment. and it really surprised me fast, everything happened once we decided to close. In a small town like ours, we're only, I think, 55,000 people, the odds of selling a 40 quart

mixer and a storage unit full of books and a whole bunch of fixtures and equipment As fast as we did was really unusual.

[01:32:16] and honestly, that's how I knew God was in it. The speed and the ease at which everything moved really to me, spoke to me that God was in it and He wanted us to move in a different direction with our lives. since then, I really learned that God has my best interests at heart. That bakery was going to be bad for me.

[01:32:38] It was good while we had it for those five years, but it was starting to be a problem for my mental health and my emotional health and even my physical health. since we've closed, I'm healthier, I'm happier, and I can really tell that God was in the closure.

[01:32:53] **David Crabill:** I definitely remember when Diana posted on social media that she was closing her business and I was definitely surprised, but I think Diana's story is a good reminder that

[01:33:04] it's not always the right idea to just keep pressing on. You do have to listen for what the right thing is, and as Daniela talked about earlier, you do have to know when to stop. So I'm glad that Diana was able to make the right decision for her and her family.

[01:33:19] Now let's hear from Sarah from episode 63.

[01:33:24] **Sarah Thongnopneua:** Hi, this is Sarah from Baked Blooms in San Rafael, California. We're a bakery that specializes in cupcake bouquets and we were featured on the Forrager podcast just over a year ago. Since then I've hired three more part time employees, so currently have a team of five members of staff, including myself.

[01:33:40] They mostly help me with baking and packaging that allows me to concentrate on the cupcake decorating. It also allows me to spend more time with my family, which is super important to me. The next step will be to get them doing some decorating too. I'm also in the process of purchasing a delivery van, so we can bring our deliveries in house rather than using a third party.

[01:34:01] So we'll be having much more control over how we represent our brand. So overall, everything's going well, but the struggle of running a small business at the same time as growing a small business is a hard one. It's like a constant game of whack a mole.

[01:34:15] **David Crabill:** I actually got to see Sarah's cupcakes in the wild, so to speak, this year. Back in April, I was at my relative's 102nd birthday party, if you can believe that, it was a potluck and someone brought her cupcakes and I saw them and I was like, wow, those are Sarah's cupcakes. And sure enough, Baked Blooms was on the packaging. So that was pretty cool. I got to try one of her cupcakes, but sounds like things are going super well for her. And I'm sure it's not the last time I will see her cupcakes at an event.

[01:34:44] Now we have Cassie Menschhofer from episode 64.

[01:34:49] **Cassie Menchhofer:** Hello, everyone. This is Cassie with Cassie's Country Cupboard. And an update from my last episode with Forrager would be that I am focusing more on wholesale accounts through fare and personal relationships. And I'm also doing a lot more co packing for other small food businesses, which is really fun for me.

[01:35:05] I did want to warn you against something that I came across in the last few months. And that would be that when you have someone else help you with Designing your website, hosting your website, that you understand in writing what that transfer of ownership looks like. If someone else helps you to design a new website, make sure that if they ever stop their business, that you still have control of that design.

[01:35:28] That was a problem that I came across where my host and designer decided to stop their business and gave me about a three week notice. And that was very frustrating for me. So beware of that and good luck.

[01:35:39] **David Crabill:** Wow, Cassie is now the third guest to say that she's had issues with her website. maybe I need to get back into web development. but anyway, I think Cassie's the only guest I've had that actually uses her kitchen to operate as a co packer for other small businesses. So that's really cool to hear. It sounds like she, like other guests, has been focusing more on wholesale and things are going well for her.

[01:36:05] Now we have Lawrance from episode 65.

[01:36:09] **Lawrance Combs:** Hey, my name is, uh, Lawrance Combs. I work with Amy Wong. she's not here right now, but, together we own batch 22 bakery. a year ago we did that podcast back then we had just gotten funding that April, May, we were still collecting funding actually at the time.

[01:36:26] And that. so we had just gotten funding for a storefront operation, and over the course of the year, we did like a lot of shopping, we did a lot of growing of the business, trying to scale, changing locations of our, kitchen, and then, in the summer of 2023, we found a location that we were happy with, but we didn't realize, like, how long negotiations can take, especially, like, both sides have lawyers that are going through every, like, inch of every contract.

[01:36:55] So, it did take us until, like, September 5th. To sign our lease with, the Los Gatos Village Shopping Center. So, we're moving in there end of this year, we have an estimated three month build out, which, could take six months or a year or something.

[01:37:10] So, things have gone a lot slower than we anticipated them to go.

[01:37:15] I definitely was surprised by just how many things we forget about or don't think about a business having. it seems so doable when you're like making the business plan And then there's like a hundred other things that you forgot about or that you didn't quite consider You have to kind of scrape it all together and make it work somehow.

[01:37:34] So I think that the major thing, with food businesses is just, you have to be really tenacious and just stick with it. Even if it doesn't feel like it, like things are working out for you.

[01:37:43] But we're happy with the location that we got. we're happy with the foot traffic and the shopping center is beautiful and the contract that we got is pretty good and our rent is pretty good, but it was a very like hard task to find something in the area that was, uh, like matched the criteria we were looking for when we made our business plan.

[01:38:00] last year was a very good year for us, so 2022 is really good. we made over six figures in sales. and this year we were only, because we were so, tunnel visioned on the, on the storefront, we didn't do very much to, advertise or things like that.

[01:38:16] We didn't spend very much of our budget on that. so we only managed to grow by about 25%. So, so far this year, we're looking to, hit like that uptick of about 25%, hopefully we can do 30 or 35, if the winter months are really good to us, cause those, those are our best months. But, um, yeah, 2022 is really, really good for us.

[01:38:36] And 2023 is good, but we didn't see the same growth that we've seen, like, year over year so far. But with the storefront coming in, we're looking for, you know, 5 to 10x of what we're doing now for 2024.

[01:38:47] **David Crabill:** I like how Lawrance casually mentioned that they made over 100, 000 last year and this year they've only had 25 percent growth. Obviously for most food businesses, uh, 25 percent year over year growth would be quite large. So, for Lawrence and Amy to be accustomed to larger growth rates than that just shows how much their business is booming, and obviously once they move into this brick and mortar location, I'm sure their business is just going to explode.

[01:39:17] Lawrance talked about all of the legal stuff they've had to deal with. Obviously, opening any brick and mortar location is complicated, but with them being in the South Bay, I wonder if it's even more extreme than in most areas of the country. Anyway, sounds like things are going super well for them.

[01:39:32] Not too surprising to hear that the process is taking longer than they expected, But I'm really looking forward to seeing how things go once they open their storefront.

[01:39:40] All right, now we have Amanda Luecke from episode 67.

[01:39:46] **Amanda Luecke:** Hi, this is Amanda, the owner of Minnie's Cookies. Since I've been on the show, I've been really trying to find some balance between work and my personal life. I originally thought taking on less custom orders was the answer and working more on pre sales and classes, but I ended up missing the creativity that custom orders gave me.

[01:40:08] And I could feel that creative spark slowly dying, so I chose instead to just not take custom orders during busy holidays, so I could use that time to focus on holiday pre sale cookies. I used to take customs whenever customers needed, so now, especially if they're a regular customer, I will try to make them in advance as long as they're okay with it.

[01:40:32] Cookies freeze very well, and they thaw very well, so a lot of times my customers have no problems with me making cookies in advance, and then they can freeze them until their event. It works really well for both of us.

[01:40:46] I also try not to do too many designs for pre sales, which helps me be able to do more cookies. In the past, I would make, 10, 12 options for pre sales because, you know, that creative spark does get going and you want to do all of

the designs, but. it becomes daunting to have to make just a few of one design and then a bunch of another design.

[01:41:10] So being able to focus on, you know, 5 6 designs instead of 10 12 really helps me to be able to do more cookies. when you have to focus your energy on holiday designs and custom order designs at the same time, for me it was just... Too overwhelming and I ended up getting so stressed out and getting absolutely nothing done until the last minute, which caused even more stress, and I would end up having multiple sleepless nights in a row.

[01:41:38] being able to have more normal bedtimes, more regular sleep was exactly what I needed so I could be present for my family and also get fresh takes on my cookies. Sometimes when I am struggling with creativity on an order All I need is to be able to go to sleep and wake up and boom, there it is.

[01:41:57] So, sometimes sleep is exactly what you need. So now I try to make more time for myself, my health, and my family, but still be able to make all the cookies I enjoy without getting burned out. I've learned that balance truly is the key to longevity in this business, but it's not always easy to see or to do.

[01:42:16] So listen to your body and to your loved ones when they tell you you need to slow down. I've gone through some health issues, some not related to cookies, but others definitely related to not taking care of myself and prioritizing cookies over my own health and sleep. It's taken me six years to figure this out, so if you don't have it figured out right now, that's okay.

[01:42:39] But when you start to feel like you want to quit, maybe you just need to take a break and let yourself breathe.

[01:42:46] **David Crabill:** Amanda is now the fourth guest so far that has said you need to listen to your body and focus on your health. And definitely a number of guests said that as well in their initial episode. So clearly a reminder that as the popularity of a business grows, there are some challenges. I would say Amanda is definitely one of the most creative type people that I've had on the show.

[01:43:07] So no surprise that she has found some creative solutions to these problems.

[01:43:13] Now we have Connie and Rick from episode 68.

[01:43:18] **Connie Martin:** Hi, David. It's Connie and Rick Martin with We B Fryin' Snacks in Charleston, West Virginia. It's hard to believe it's been over a year now since we did that podcast. We've had some change, not a lot of change. we're still growing. Uh, We were in 15 locations last year. We're now, we're up to 20. I ended up going to some classes and got a grant, to get a bagging machine. We did get a bagging machine. It's not all complete, like we won and won it, done everything. But this one does weigh it and bag it. We just need to do some tweaking to it before we really get to start using it much.

[01:43:56] But it is going to be a help once we do. What else? Our online orders have really picked up. We've been doing real good with those. Oh, and we've been to the State Fair again twice since that.

[01:44:07] **Rick Martin:** Sold out both times.

[01:44:09] **Connie Martin:** Yeah, both times. Last year, we sold over a thousand bags, and this year,

[01:44:15] **Rick Martin:** 1,500

[01:44:16] **Connie Martin:** yeah, we sold right at fifteen hundred, so, and during this year's fair, we picked up three new places to sell them in West One of them that we picked up this year was, it's called Tamarack. It's our biggest welcome center in West Virginia, and we're getting a lot of leads, because a lot of people go through there.

[01:44:34] Uh, What else has changed, Rick? Anything?

[01:44:37] **Rick Martin:** Not a lot. We're checking in investment. We're looking for property to uh, expand.

[01:44:44] **Connie Martin:** Yeah, we're still looking to expand. It's just taking a little longer than what we thought. But anyways, yeah, we're doing great and um, just plugging right along and, we be frying all the time now.

[01:44:57] **David Crabill:** Gotta love Connie and Rick. They are so authentic and fun. I think they could probably sell just about anything. but 1, 500 bags at the fair. I did the math on this, they sell their bags for 6 each, so that's 9, 000 of sales they did in just a week and a half. Pretty incredible and great to hear that they are doing so well.

[01:45:19] Next up, Jewel from episode 69.

[01:45:23] **Jewel Burgess:** Hello, this is Jewel Burgess from Cake Jewel Custom Cakes. So since I've been on the show, a few things have changed. I've expanded the types of cakes I offer. I continue to take orders for sculpted and realistic style cakes, but I now accept orders for more traditional celebration cakes as well. This change caused my business to double in the amount of orders that I get in a month, but it allows me to keep my basic design skills sharp.

[01:45:53] brings in a more steady income and I get to work with a different market. I've also taken a 12 month business course with Janelle Copeland and I highly recommend it. And it helped me to find ways to cut costs, improve my marketing. And I've learned a lot of different pricing strategies. I'm opening up a Cake Jewel Etsy store where I'll offer a variety of cake toppers, silicone molds, and templates.

[01:46:22] And then since the interview I traveled to Canada to compete on Food Network's show called Canada's Big Bake. My teammates and I learned how to incorporate some really cool animatronics into the structure of our cakes, but unfortunately we didn't take the win on this one, but it really was a fun adventure.

[01:46:43] So I continue to be contacted by show producers. To apply for other television shows and competition, so we'll just have to wait and see which one I'll be on next. But I just wanna tell you to keep pushing yourself out of your comfort zone. Believe in your yourself, and never stop reaching for your dreams.

[01:47:02] **David Crabill:** I'm pretty sure Jewel has been on more Food Network competitions than any of my other guests. She's been on four competitions now. And the thing with these competitions is oftentimes the participants will know. About the show well before it's announced publicly and they can't say anything about it So I don't know if that was any foreshadowing from Jewel there if she already knows she's gonna be on another competition But I do remember that she said in her episode that she would probably keep doing them until she wins So we'll see how many more competitions she ends up going on Anyway, it sounds like things are going great and that she's doubled her business by accepting more different types of cakes So that is awesome to hear

[01:47:43] next would be Sahar Shomali from episode 70. now Sahar decided not to record an update for this episode because she said that not much has

changed since she was last on the show. Her business is still plugging right along. so definitely not a bad thing.

[01:47:57] I just thought I'd mention that before we move on to our next guest, Annette from episode 71.

[01:48:04] **Annette Conrad:** Well, hello, my name is Annette Conrad and I'm the owner and lead creative for Edible Impressions, a company I started over 18 years ago from a hobby. I'm also the creator of cookie hobby to business made simple. And I'm so delighted to be here with a quick update as to where we are. And I say we, because I do have a small team. Uh, last time we spoke, I was continuing to niche down our services to our corporate clients. And I'm really happy to say that nearly 90 percent of our business sales is dedicated to our experiential companies and corporate clients.

[01:48:38] And what we do for them really quick is special events, trade shows, and our virtual experiences still continue to be super popular as we now are headed towards the holiday season. When I'm not fulfilling orders with my team, I am also teaching. As I mentioned, I have a Facebook group Cookie Hobby to Business Made

[01:48:56] simple, formerly called Cookie Hobby to Business 101. And I have now have two memberships that I offer at AnnetteConrad.com and loving the opportunity to teach fellow cookiers how to transform their hobby to business.

[01:49:13] **David Crabill:** Is it just me or are there uncanny similarities between Annette and Debbie from episode 30? The way they talk about their businesses, The fact that they both honed in on the corporate clients and perhaps it's no surprise that they are both two of the most successful entrepreneurs I've had on the show.

[01:49:31] Notably, Annette didn't mention this, but her Facebook group has grown by 50 percent since she was on the show just over a year ago.

[01:49:37] So I really appreciate all that she continues to do for our industry.

[01:49:42] All right, now let's hear from Gary from episode 72.

[01:49:46] **Gary Knight:** Hi, I'm Gary Knight, owner and creator of Knight's Candy Shop. It's been about a year since my podcast and a lot has happened, so here's an update. We are currently making and selling close to 100 pieces of our

fancy filled chocolates weekly, with new flavors and designs each week at the local farmer's market, and we're slowly building repeat customers.

[01:50:05] We are also scheduled for various pop up Events through the holiday season. Recently, we have partnered with a couple of local businesses, which is also building momentum through referrals. I was finally able to take Luis Amado's Master Chocolatier's class online, which has helped me be more creative with my designs and definitely more efficient in the kitchen.

[01:50:23] Soon I will be taking his class in person, hands on, which I'm very excited about. Some things we have learned along the way. Having products at different price points is key. My wife is helping out in that regard by making dipped chocolate chip cookies and fudge to supplement our filled chocolates and bars.

[01:50:39] We have learned that little signs indicating the candy flavors should be right in front of the product rather than on a menu separate from them. Large banners and bright displays have drawn attention to our booth. We even have a gumball machine to draw the little ones. We have learned we can introduce new flavors but also need to have familiar flavors on hand as well.

[01:50:58] Social media has been key so people know where we are and what we are making, but it is also important for us to share from our personal lives as well, and we do that as well on the social media. Chocolate continues to be my therapy as it challenges me every day in every of running a business as well as the complicated processes of making our chocolates.

[01:51:17] It really is a dream come true to be able to share our yummy creations with so many people and to see their reaction when they taste them is absolutely priceless.

[01:51:25] **David Crabill:** wow, Gary packed a lot of great tips into that update. And I do remember him saying on his episode Amado's class someday. So I'm glad to hear that he's done that, and it's great to see how much progress he's made in just the past year.

[01:51:41] Now let's hear from Jenny from episode 74.

[01:51:45] **Jenny Berg:** Hi, this is Jenny Berg with Crumb Sourdough Microbakery, and I'm so excited to share with you all of my updates since I was on the show in November of last year. So since then, I have expanded my

bakery offerings to include not just sourdough breads, but scones, baguettes, focaccia, pizza shells, and crackers.

[01:52:05] And in doing that, I added a second pickup day to the week. So now I have pickups on Tuesdays and Fridays. I also recently bought a new

[01:52:17] And I'm also working on getting a second oven. But the biggest news I have to share is that in June, Oregon passed new cottage food operation legislation. We're no longer tied as the most restrictive state in the union. So our new law, SB 643, which starts next year, 2024, is going to allow cottage food operators to wholesale to stores and coffee shops.

[01:52:43] We'll be able to ship our products. We can have a shopping cart and take payment on our websites. And now all home bakers. CFOs and licensed domestic kitchen bakers, we can have pets in the home, and that opens up huge doors, so CFOs who want to graduate to an inspected home kitchen and operate under very little restrictions and who have pets can now do that.

[01:53:08] It was really thrilling getting to testify during the Senate and House committee hearings and working with our legislators and wow, what an educational process that whole experience was. Probably the most disappointing thing through that whole experience was that we did not get unlimited sales in Oregon.

[01:53:26] We were at 20,000 gross annual sales cap. Now we are at \$50,000. So we hope to get that changed, sometime in the future. Some lessons I've learned where that change and growth come new learning curves as a self-taught baker in particular. So I just encourage everyone to be kind to yourself. And I think that's all that I have to report.

[01:53:49] And I hope you all have a wonderful day.

[01:53:51] **David Crabill:** Let me just say, I don't think that Oregon would have this vastly improved cottage food law if it were not for Jenny. She certainly didn't do it herself. She had a lot of help from the Institute for Justice and others, but I still remember when she reached out to me almost two years ago, asking how she could try to improve the law and in her episode, she spoke about the disappointment she faced when the bill last year did not pass. So it's great to hear this update from her and see that Her persistence has paid off and now everyone can benefit from the new laws.

[01:54:21] So, it's just a reminder that if you're frustrated with the limitations of your law You really can make a difference by stepping up and helping get something started.

[01:54:30] And now let's hear from Juno from episode 77.

[01:54:34] **Juno Rosales:** Hi, my name is Juno Rosales and my business is The Pajama Baker. since the last podcast, The Pajama Baker has changed in so many ways. What I've learned in the past few months is that I'm better off as a wholesaler versus a retailer. Because we have the capacity to produce big orders, I decided to focus on that for now.

[01:54:55] So currently we're trying to close a deal with an airline company, which means I supply them frozen cakes as long as the flight comes out of LA or from the Philippines.

[01:55:04] this airline deal just happened serendipitously because I was in the same restaurant where the head chef of this airline was dining, we were there at the same time I met her. We made a good connection. One thing led to another, and.

[01:55:21] I am very excited about this because I love that our frozen cakes can finally make it across the globe and remember in the last interview, I told you my ultimate dream is to have a global brand.

[01:55:33] I'm hoping that this This deal will be the beginnings of making that dream a sweet reality.

[01:55:40] What I've learned in the past few months, it's actually something that I've always believed, but I had to relearn. I had to remember to keep on moving. Even, like, the baby steps can help you get somewhere. as long as you're moving, you will get somewhere.

[01:55:59] somewhere big. If you keep on moving and you keep on dreaming, you'll get to your goal one day.

[01:56:05] **David Crabill:** Wow. Having your products featured on an airline, that is a crazy evolution for Juno's business. And she also mentioned like others that she is focusing more on wholesale. That's I think the sixth guest so far that has said they are putting more effort into wholesale than when they were last on the show. So that's definitely interesting to note. And Juno's story just continues to amaze me.

[01:56:30] Alright, now let's hear from Carla Jones Harris from episode 78.

[01:56:35] **Carla Jones-Harris:** Hi, this is Carla from Flour-ish. The last time you heard from me, I was the proud owner of the piping bag bakery, but I have rebranded so that my brand really speaks to my mission, which is to provide nutritious, organic gluten free baked goods. Since you've spoken to me, I've invested in my business by becoming a member of the entrepreneur community with Amanda Schoenberg.

[01:57:02] and I focused with her on rebranding, also on other marketing areas like Google My Business, Yelp. And my online presence, I had three different opportunities to do wholesale collaborations. All three fell through, but not before I went and I, rented a local commercial kitchen, which of course I never actually got to use because all three opportunities, as I said, fell through.

[01:57:33] I learned from that to choose your collaborations wisely and cautiously, to not give away product, to have all of your numbers and do not waver from them, to be passionate about, whatever cause that you are getting behind and to make sure that you serve before you sell.

[01:57:59] also learn not to be afraid to raise my prices, which I have done since I rebranded and I'm about to do again, because organic ingredients are very, very costly.

[01:58:14] And, yeah, so I need to be able to continually offer that. and I've also learned that I need to stand out. So, Because, organic ingredients are so expensive, I have toyed with the idea of just doing conventional gluten free.

[01:58:32] But I just, I really can't find it in my heart to... Put profit over people. So, I'm still sticking with that to this point.

[01:58:42] **David Crabill:** Wow, that's definitely the first time I've heard of somebody actually renting a commercial kitchen and then never using it.

[01:58:50] so that's really unfortunate to hear. She mentioned Amanda Schoenberg in there, and just as a reminder, Amanda was on episode 80 of my podcast. Great episode. If you haven't heard it already. And I would say Carla is definitely one of the most mission driven entrepreneurs I've had on the show. And I'm glad to hear that she's finding a way to stick to her purpose, but also make the business work.

[01:59:13] All right, and next up we have Lisa, who is both on episode five and episode 81.

[01:59:20] **Lisa Kivirist:** Hello, this is Lisa Kivirist. I'm the co author of the second edition now of the book *Homemade for Sale*, co authored with my husband, John Ivanko.

[01:59:30] And Since the last interview I did with David for his podcast, we're still fighting for cottage food rights here in my fine state of Wisconsin.

[01:59:39] We had a second lawsuit going on behalf of all items that one could sell that are non hazardous.

[01:59:44] The good news is the judge ruled. In our favor at the end of December last year in 2022, However, the state of Wisconsin both appealed the case and was able to get a stay issued, which basically means her ruling is on ice until the appeal, which could be a year or two. So unfortunately, no, cocoa bombs can be sold

[02:00:06] for the holidays here in Wisconsin, but we are still fighting.

[02:00:10] We had the second, National Cottage Food Conference online in April and that went really well.

[02:00:15] And it just exemplifies the importance and the need and the wonderful experiences we have when we can all come together as a national cottage food community to learn from each other.

[02:00:25] such an emphasis on sharing ideas, sharing our ups, our downs, and everything in between, and that's what really is going to Help us keep growing and expanding into the future.

[02:00:35] **David Crabill:** definitely unfortunate news in Wisconsin with their lawsuit basically being on hold this year, but I continue to be blown away by all that Lisa and her husband John do for this community, and I really question what Wisconsin's law would even look like right now if it weren't for all of their support.

[02:00:52] Definitely loved the cottage food conference that they put on back in April. Once again, an amazing nationwide gathering. And I appreciate all that they did to help make that happen.

[02:01:02] All right, and finally, to wrap this up, here's Mike from episode 87.

[02:01:09] **Mike Skyring:** My name is Michael Skyring and I am the owner and baker at Menbake Cookies here in Michigan. Since my last podcast on here with David, a lot has drastically changed I guess you could say. I went from running a business out of my house, to doing weekly fire markets, to now running a brick and mortar store.

[02:01:30] We opened about a month and a half ago, so August 20th ish time frame, and since then it's it's been crazy, it's been a wild ride, there's been struggles, but it's been amazing. It's definitely a journey. It's not easy to get a business up and running and there's plenty of downfalls and things breaking and not working, but you just kind of got to go with the flow and a lot of that stuff is out of your control.

[02:01:51] Um, just kind of run it out, you know, see how it all plays out in the end. I would say the biggest surprise since opening the brick and mortar, would be the transition from. Doing my home business to this business and seeing the customer Shift to an area, maybe 10 minutes, you know, 15 minutes away and seeing if those customers, you know, crossover and we'll make that trip for your business.

[02:02:11] And surprisingly to me, I guess the kind of the biggest surprise would be that. they actually have.

[02:02:15] mean, I honestly didn't think it'd be like that. I thought I would, you know, see one or the other. Um, maybe then people not shift and get a new customer demographic in this area. but the customers have definitely, you know, followed and, followed my journey and, you know, they've been with me.

[02:02:27] You know, the past two years for my house, so to see them cross over to a brick and mortar, has definitely been a great, thing to see, so far. It's been great. Uh, no complaints. I'm loving it. I'm loving having a bigger kitchen, being in a bigger space. Um, and if you definitely get the opportunity to do it, I would say, try it, it's a whole different ballgame,

[02:02:44] **David Crabill:** Super cool to see Mike expanding to a brick and mortar. I remember on his episode, he said that he had that goal, but he didn't exactly know when it would happen. obviously, it happened pretty quick. Also interesting to hear that his customers stuck with him, even though he moved fifteen minutes away.

[02:03:01] just show some of the benefits of starting with a cottage food business building those raving fans and they will stick with you as your business grows.

[02:03:09] and that wraps up this very special 100th episode of the Forrager Podcast. I think you'll agree that this was a powerful episode and I just want to thank the guests for taking the time to share their updates.

[02:03:21] For more information about this episode, go to forrager.com/podcast/100.

[02:03:28] Now, at the beginning of this episode, I said that I would share a couple small changes I'll be making to the show moving forward. The first change would be the episode titles. Up to this point, I have created titles based on what I felt like the theme of the episode was. And moving forward, I'm going to have the episode titles just be the name of the guest and their business name. and there's a couple reasons for this. First of all, the only reason I was concocting episode titles is just because I was kind of trying to mimic what other podcasters were doing and most podcasts have each episode focused on a specific topic and bring on a guest to talk about that topic, but my podcast is a bit different. It's definitely focused on the stories and journeys of entrepreneurs. And so I've sort of realized that it makes more sense to have the episode title reflect that, that this is a story of this person and their business journey. Also, one thing I didn't expect when I titled the episodes is that the title would have a pretty big effect on how many people listen to the episode.

[02:04:31] For instance, earlier you heard Kourtney from Episode 43. Reference, her podcast title, Food, Freedom, and Pie. And her episode actually got quite a lot more views than all of the other episodes that surrounded it. Now, don't get me wrong, Kourtney's episode was fantastic, but so were the other episodes surrounding it. Clearly, people were just captivated by the title, Food, freedom, and pie. And then on the flip side, I feel like there's been times where I feel like an episode is super powerful. But then the title doesn't capture people's attention. And if you've listened to all 100 episodes to this point, I think you'll agree that pretty much every episode has something to offer. And hopefully having the episode titles a bit more generic will encourage people to listen to them regardless of what the title may be.

[02:05:19] The other small change that I'll be making would be with the episode images. now you may not even see the images if you're listening with just Apple Podcasts or something like that, but the images appear on my website and on my social media pages and also are featured, I think on Spotify. So up to this

point, every image has been made with a template that's a kind of widescreen format, 16 by 9. And I've learned that that doesn't really work well with certain podcast systems, that they expect a square image. And so moving forward, it's just going to be the image of the guest and their title overlaid onto it.

[02:05:56] So not a change that most anyone would notice, but I have learned that the wide screen images don't really work well for podcasts.

[02:06:03] Alright, so those are the changes and remember I am doing a fudge giveaway for this episode. To get a chance to win a box of fudge, please take a moment and leave me an honest review on Apple Podcasts. If you don't have an Apple device, you can find someone who does or download iTunes on a Windows computer.

[02:06:20] Once you've left your review, go to forrager.com/contact and let me know what username you used to leave the review. And if you've left me a review in the past, thank you so much. Just let me know and I'll include you in the drawing as well. The deadline for participating in this giveaway is October 31st, 2023.

[02:06:38] And finally, if you are thinking about selling your own homemade food, check out my free mini course where I walk you through the steps you need to take to get a cottage food business off the ground. To get the course, go to cottagefoodcourse.com.

[02:06:53] Thanks for listening, and I'll see you in the next episode.